



Safety Topic of the Month: Safe Driving – Defensive Driving

**Richmond Refinery
October 2007**



Defensive Driving, your tool to prevent MVCs

At the Richmond Refinery, Motor Vehicle Collisions (MVCs) can be classified as light, serious, and major – depending on the speed of the collision and the resulting damage that occurs.

It may be surprising for you to learn that the exposure you have in a motor vehicle on a daily basis may be greater risk than any other hazards in our work environment.

It isn't necessarily the vehicle itself is dangerous, it's what drivers do when they get behind the wheel that causes most incidents. Whether you drive on the job or just to and from work, motor vehicle safety is an important part of your workplace safety.

Did you know that we have 32 Motor Vehicle Collisions (Company and Contractor combined) at our worksite this year?



Safety Tips for your time at the wheel

- ❖ Make sure the vehicle is mechanically sound and well-maintained. Walk around your vehicle before attempting to drive away.
- ❖ Wear your seat belt, even for short trips.
- ❖ Drive at a safe speed. At Richmond the speed limit is 20 mph unless posted otherwise (Always 5 mph in a work zone).
- ❖ Do not follow too closely. Leave at least a two-second space between you and the vehicle in front of you. You should always increase this distance in bad weather and other hazardous conditions.
- ❖ Give your undivided attention to your driving.
 - ❖ Don't use a cell phone while driving
- ❖ Have your eyesight checked and, if need be, update your prescription eye wear regularly so that your vision remains sharp.



Defensive Driving Tips can help prevent Motor Vehicle Collisions when put into practice:

Drive defensively. Be prepared for the unexpected -- this includes watching for mistakes by other drivers.

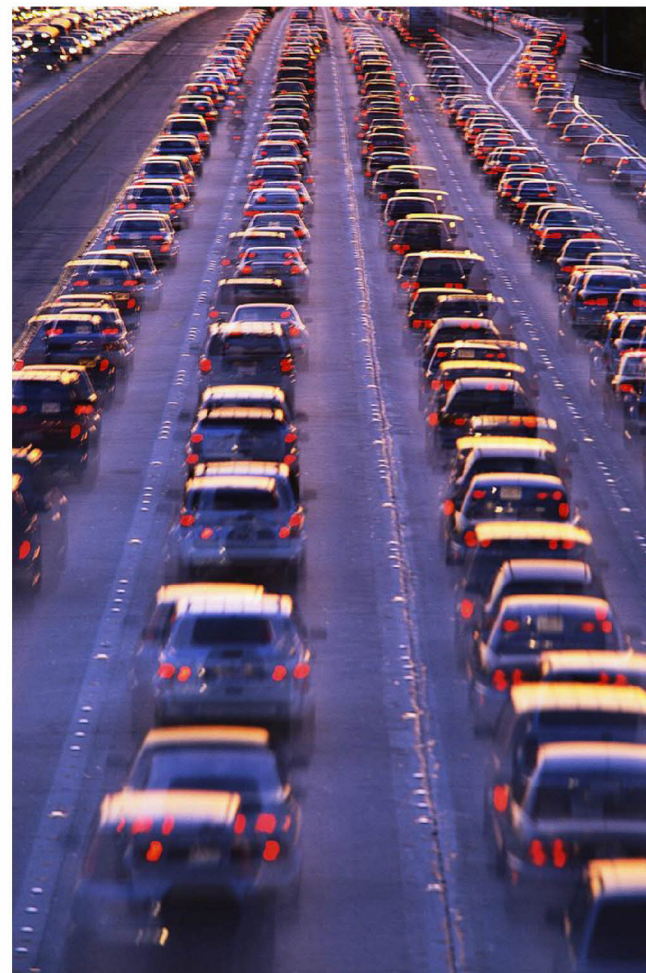
Adapted from the "Smith System" for safe driving:

1. Leave Yourself an Out

- Maintain sufficient space cushion between you and the vehicle in front; don't tailgate.
- 2-4 second space cushion rule (within city limits).
- 4-6 second space cushion rule (highways and during inclement weather conditions).

2. Aim High in Steering

- Scan 12-15 seconds in advance.
- To predict traffic flow or road changes.
- Helps to center your vehicle in the lane.
- Avoid driving behind large vehicles (called “billboards” because they limit/block visibility)





3. Get the Big Picture

- Scan ALL your mirrors every 5-8 seconds.
- Look over both shoulders to scan blind spots.
- Maintain "360-degree awareness".

4. Keep your Eyes Moving

- Avoid staring (this helps prevent falling asleep).
- Scan your mirrors and every 5-8 seconds.
 - Maintains the “big picture”





5. Make sure they see and hear you

- Increase other driver's visibility of you:
 - Use horns, lights/blinkers, hand signals to communicate your driving intentions.
 - Remember, if you can't see the driver in their mirror, chances are neither can they see you.



Backing Methods Common in the Transportation Industry for Preventing MVC's



- *As a rule, avoid backing up whenever possible*
 - 1 out of 4 MVA's within industrial settings involve backing
- *When backing up is unavoidable:*
 - Use of a spotter is helpful
 - ▶ If backing up requires a spotter to safely perform, exercise "stop work authority" and find a spotter before proceeding.

Backing Methods Common in the Transportation Industry for Preventing MVC's



- Prior to backing:
 - Vehicle should be oriented for a straight reverse into stall
 - Scan blind spots before backing
- If possible back your vehicle upon arrival- instead of departure
 - Driver will have just performed visual scan of the immediate area behind vehicle
 - Upon return vehicle will already be positioned to drive forward
- ...if it is not feasible to back in upon arrival, perform a rear walk-around prior to re-entering your vehicle.

Backing Methods Common in the Transportation Industry for Preventing MVC's



- Always perform “sight-side” backing when possible, e.g. back in the direction which allows primary use of the driver side-view mirror.
 - The passenger side-view mirror distorts distance perception and has a wider blind spot due to angular relationship between the driver and mirror
 - Even so, always scan rear and passenger view mirrors while backing up.
- Minimize the distance traveled in reverse
 - Only reverse to exit a stall or area far enough to straighten your vehicle (in drive) to proceed forward.



For Young Drivers in your Family

In California a teen's license is a 'provisional' license until they're 18.

Additional rules for young drivers:

*"During the first 12 months after you are licensed, you cannot drive between 11 PM and 5 AM **and** you cannot transport passengers under age 20 unless you are accompanied by your parent or guardian, a licensed driver 25 years of age or older, or a licensed or certified driving instructor."*

California DMV Website:

<http://www.dmv.org/ca-california/driver-handbook.php> (Requires Internet Access) 